FEBRUARY 1959

The Reformed Journal

A PERIODICAL OF REFORMED COMMENT AND OPINION

JOHN CALVIN ON JOHN CALVIN
The Editors

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MEETING, OR MISSING, THE POST-CHRISTIAN AGE
A Discussion by Peter De Jong and Hugh A. Koops

BOOK REVIEW

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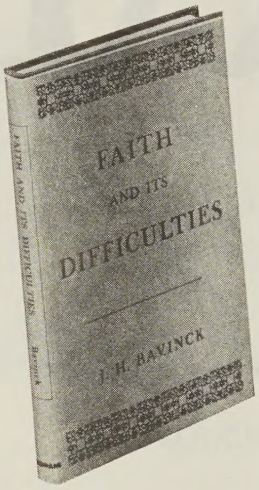

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John Calvin on John Calvin

When I was as yet a very little boy, my father had destined me for the study of theology. But afterwards, when he considered that the legal profession commonly raised those who followed it to wealth, this prospect induced him suddenly to change his purpose. Thus it came to pass, that I was withdrawn from the study of philosophy, and was put to the study of law. To this pursuit I endeavored faithfully to apply myself, in obedience to the will of my father; but God, by the secret guidance of his providence, at length gave a difficult direction to my course. And first, since I was too obstinately devoted to the superstitions of Popery to be easily extricated from so profound an abyss of mire, God by a sudden conversion subdued and brought my mind to a teachable frame, which was more hardened in such matters than might have been expected from one at my early period of life. Having thus received some taste and knowledge of true godliness, I was immediately inflamed with so intense a desire to make progress therein, that although I did not altogether leave off other studies, I yet pursued them with less ardor.

I was quite surprised to find that before a year had elapsed, all who had any desire after purer doctrine were continually coming to me to learn, although I myself was as yet but a mere novice and tyro. Being of a disposition somewhat unpolished and bashful, which led me always to love the shade and retirement, I then began to seek some secluded corner where I might be withdrawn from the public view; but so far from being able to accomplish the object of my desire, all my retreats were like public schools. In short, whilst my one great object was to live in seclusion without being known, God so led me about through different turnings and changes, that he never permitted me to rest in any place, until, in spite of my natural disposition, he brought me forth to public notice.

Preface to Commentary on the *Psalms*

That he (Caroli) might, therefore, appear to have got the better of us in something or other, he accused the whole meeting of Arianism. I rose up immediately and brought forward the confession in our Catechism, which is repeated in our public letter to your college. Even this did not quiet him, but he declared that we would be suspected in that matter, until we subscribed to the creed of Athanasius. I replied, that it was not my practice to approve any thing as the words of God, unless upon due consideration . . . . Letter to Megander, 1537

When we first heard, therefore, that the Arian heresy was imputed to us, and then a little afterwards the Sabellian, none of these things very much disturbed us, seeing that our ears had long since been well seasoned against such calumnies; and we entertained the assured hope that they would eventually pass away in a wreath of smoke.

Letter to Grynee, 1537

As for what you have said, that you would not like to have such a servant as myself, I confess that I am not qualified to render you great services; for I have not the ability, and besides, you do not need my services. It is most sure, however, that the inclination is not wanting, and as long as I shall live, please God, I shall always persevere in that purpose; and howsoever you may disdain my service, that will not prevent my being at heart your humble servant, and with a good will. For the rest, those who know me are well aware that I have never aspired to gain access to the courts of princes, the more that I have never been tempted to court worldly honor. Even had I made the attempt, possibly it might have been in vain. But I render thanks to our Lord that I have never been tempted; for I have good reason to be content to serve so good a Master, who has accepted me and retained me in his household, yea, forsooth, in appointing me to an office of such dignity and excellency, however contemptible it may be according to the world's reckoning. I would be above measure exceeding in my ingratitude did I not prefer that situation to all the riches and honors of the world. Letter to the Queen of Navarre, 1545

Among other thing laid to my charge is this, that I have no children. I answer, that the Lord did give me a child, but was pleased to deprive me of it. But thousands of children, in all parts of Christendom, have been given me in its place . . . .

Satisfied with my humble condition, I have ever delighted in a life of poverty, and am a burden to no one: I remain contented with the office which the Lord has given me. So far am I from seeking an increase of stipend, that I have given up a portion of that allowed me. I not only employ my best ability, my labor and study, to do good to the church to which I am more especially devoted; but I also endeavor, by every means in my power, to benefit all other churches: and so do I fulfil the duties of a teacher, that no one can discover in my earnest truth and diligence any trace of ambition. I bear with many annoyances; but I suffer neither the great nor the powerful to abridge my freedom of speech. Thus I give not the reins to the great by flattering them; nor fear I the displeasures of either one party or the other. Up to this hour, successful as I have been, I am free from pride; and though I have been assailed by many a storm and tempest, my courage and fortitude have never failed me, till God, by his especial goodness, has come to my deliverance. I live at peace with my associates, and endeavor with all sincerity to keep up the friendship which exists among us.

Reply to Balduin, 1563

Growing Up Religiously (I)

by John T. Daling

AT AN APT MOMENT Paul told a Christian group that he had arrived at a stage where he had got over childish ways of doing things. Since Paul's words occur in a section explicitly intended to give instruction concerning matters specifically religious (as distinguished from strictly theological), it seems clear that he wanted his Christian friends to do likewise. He felt constrained to inform another Christian group that they were not meant to remain as children haphazardly impressed by every new thing that came along. And the writer to the Hebrews deplores the fact that whereas those Christians should have arrived at a stage where they should be teaching others, they actually still needed others to teach them kindergarten subject-matter about religious life.

In many passages Paul states unambiguously that Christians have the obligation to grow up, *to become mature* in the religious dimension of their being. In fact, he suggests that all the training, all the molding forces in the Christian community have, or at least should have, as their main purpose: making Christians *mature*. To paraphrase his words, he says that to the living Church in this world God gave a variety of differently gifted people for the express purpose of helping the members of the Church to become mature; that is, to achieve that measure of development which is meant by the "fulness of Christ," so that " . . . we henceforth be no more children . . . but speaking the truth in love may grow up into Him in all things. . . ."

It is possible to belabor the obvious unnecessarily. But one wonders at times whether what is Scripturally so obvious is also actually recognized and accepted or effectuated. It seems a clear thrust of Scripture that the Christian life is not something static, but dynamic; it is not an end-point once and for all given, but an ever on-going process; it is not mainly a set of teachings which one intellectually apprehends, but essentially a way of living (including the intellectual) which one increasingly achieves; in short, it is something which each person must constantly be developing in himself. Growing-up religiously is a task, and assignment. It's a job which the person must be working at continuously. The Christian life does not stop with the question, "Are you saved, brother?" It goes on with another question, "Are you saving yourself?" or, rather, "Are you restoring yourself to the state that God originally intended you to be?" The Christian life is not merely a matter of "Are you converted?" but "Are you actively converting yourself?"

There is, of course, another side to this matter. An all-significant one. A person cannot save himself. He cannot be genuinely converted into a Christian way without first being regenerated by God. This must be affirmed emphatically. But the other matter must be affirmed just as emphatically. It is a thoroughly Biblical doctrine that it is God that saves the sinner, that God through an act of completely free grace implants a new life, a regenerating principle in the root-core of the person's being. This we all admit and profess. Strangely, however, there are only a few Biblical texts which say that the Christian life is a *gift* (from this it should not be inferred that the doctrine is a flimsy one). These texts most of us Reformed people spot rather easily. But just as strangely, there are numerous texts which state explicitly that the Christian life is a *task*, is something which the Christian himself *must do*. One New Testament writer after another piles up the evidence on this side of the ledger. But if our actions speak at all about this *task*-aspect, their voice is hardly an audible whisper.

Among us there seems to be a tendency to stress what is given, to ignore or sidestep what must be done. What must be done *by us* seems to involve such little things, such everyday things, such seemingly unimportant things, that we apparently are not too much bothered about not doing very much about them. "Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter tre kingdom of heaven," does not seem to hit us very hard. We look like adults, and so we are inclined to consider ourselves as grown-ups too. We seem inclined to consider ourselves as all set; our course seems finished even though we haven't yet started to run or started to fight the kind of things we should be fighting against (not each other, but our own native tendencies). When Paul says that if we are in Christ we ought to be seeking the things that are above, then almost immediately we flit to the realm beyond the stars instead of forcing ourselves to inject the heavenly way of living into our everyday earthly existence, as he himself says so simply but dramatically.

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* The substance of these two articles was given in an address for the 1958 fall mass meeting of the Michigan Southwest League of Men's Societies. Its printed appearance was suggested by several ministers present at that meeting.

NOT only is the Christian life a task, but the New Testament writers also strongly intimate that it is a matter of growth, of development, of gradual progression. There is in their writings the notion that although the regenerating seed comes all at once, its working does not blossom into full fruit all at once. It not only takes a lot of effort, even constant effort, but also time, perhaps much time, for the new-life principle to have its permeating influence in any and all of the person's attitudes and activities. It seems as if this, too, is often ignored. We don't expect garden seeds to burst forth into full fruit as soon as there is evidence of germination; yet, we often seem unrealistically to expect such results from young people, from new converts, or from primitive Christians.

The New Testament writers also intimate that there must be rules to help get started in the right direction the process of "Christ-izing" the person. Rules are needed in the growing-up period in any area of life. Little children need rules if they are to survive physically; later they need rules to develop their minds properly; still later, rules are needed for driving safely, managing finances properly, etc. But rules are always intended only as a means by which the person comes to discipline, to control, to regulate himself. In the wholesome development of the individual there comes or should come a stage in which the person no longer needs the rules as external forces to keep him in proper alignment. He does not thereafter flaunt the rules, but he is no longer limited by them. He, so to speak, gets beyond the letter to the spirit back of the inner meaning of the rules.

The Apostle Paul states time and again that a similar situation obtains for the *mature* Christian (who must be sharply distinguished from the adult Christian by the sad fact that not all Christians adult in years are also adult or mature in their Christianity, in their Christlikeness). The mature Christian, so Paul says, ought to be able to stand on his own feet. His inner development in the Christian way ought to have progressed to the point where he no longer must have others tell him what he may do and may not do, where he may go and where he may not go, what he may eat or drink and what he may not. In his letter to the Galatians he wonders whether all his work of instructing had been in vain. It seemed to him that those with whom he had worked so ardently still had not on their own matured to the point he felt they should have been. They were still limiting themselves to the externalities of rules. On the other hand, he seems at least indirectly to compliment the Colossians for having achieved a higher or greater stage of maturity in this matter of rules. At least, he does not criticize them but rather counsels them not to worry about possible criticisms on the matter of keeping or not keeping man-made rules. The writer to the Hebrew Christians states specifically that the religiously mature person is one "who has developed by experience his power to discriminate between what is good or bad for him" (Philips transl.).

However, Paul clearly recognizes that not all adult Christians are mature Christians. How often doesn't he feel it necessary to warn adult Christians not to use the liberty or freedom they have in Christ as an occasion for the flesh. How often doesn't he feel compelled to tell adult Christians that they are still acting very immaturely. Parenthetically, it is noteworthy that he does *not* say that they do not know enough intellectually, or that they have not formed enough organizations, etc.; but he does insist that they have not Christianized their own personalities enough. How often doesn't he remind them to do the kind of things which they themselves ought already to have gained the sense to do. And the writer to the Hebrews laments the fact that those adult Christians still have to be told what to do and what not to do.

Gleanings from Scripture thus seem to substantiate the assertions that the Christian life is a *task* for the person to whom a renewed life has been given; it is a life which involves *maturation*, or growth; and it is a life in whicr it is possible for this maturing process to be stunted, or to be stopped before it reaches the goal that is divinely intended. Paradoxically, a person may be an adult Christian, and yet be only a babe with respect to his Christianity, or he may be growing, or he may even be approximating the stature of Christian maturity.

THINGS can apparently happen in the religious development of the person just as in other aspects of his development. Adults may be very mature in some ways, and yet very immature in others. It is possible for adults never to get beyond the childhood stage in one or more of various aspects of their being: some still have temper-tantrums like a young child; others are still like a young child in that they cannot keep a penny in their pockets; some act like babies in considering something very desirable because it is shiny and gaudy or glittery; again, other adults apparently do not get beyond the know-it-all stage of early adolescence, for they are amenable to no opinion but their own; still other adults haven't got beyond the adolescent stage of having an exaggerated interest in their outer appearance — for them new clothing is the important thing, or they feel naked if their faces are not covered — newly so, with cosmetics; still other adults seem to act as if they never got out of the

"lover-boy" or "lover-girl" stage of late adolescence — no matter how old, bald, or wrinkled they become they think they still have the sex-appeal of a late adolescent, or if they don't have it they seem to think that it is of the essence of life to have it. There are many other ways in which seeming adults betray immaturities in the form of distortions or arrestments in some phase of their overall development.

It seems as if one can detect analogues or parallels also between the religious development and the development of other aspects of the person. Immaturities in the form of distortions or arrestments can appear in the religious area too. The Apostle Paul already in his day made mention of several types of childishness (not child-likeness) betrayed by adult Christians of his era. Several types seem discernible in our day too. There is, of course, the danger of forcing seeming facts into a pre-conceived scheme or notion of parallelisms or analogues. But the following strike me as some of them.

It is typical for young children somewhere between the ages of approximately five through eight gradually to develop a moral consciousness. Previously they obeyed or disobeyed an external authority. But in this stage they begin from within their own selves to distinguish right and wrong, good and bad. One of the main ways by which adults can tell that this inner development is beginning to take place is by the child's tattlings. On the basis of its inner developing discriminations the young child is beginning to tell to adults the wrong that others did.

Apparently many re-born but poorly self-sanctifying or sadly immature Christians act in a similar manner. Adult Christians can be "tattlers" too. They seem to get a kick out of telling and retelling the wrong they know about others, whether these be fellow-Christians or not. Souls are wounded and reputations ruined by gossip or slander that actually may be lies. But unnecessary agony can also be caused by spreading what is true and yet *not* kind to tell *nor* necessary to be told. Paul clearly states that the essence of Christian love (which is the high mark that every maturing Christian seeks constantly to achieve) is not only that it "thinketh no evil" but also that it "rejoiceth not in iniquity"; it does not get a kick out of someone else's sin, nor does it derive any satisfaction in peddling the news of someone else's sin. The mature Christian is not insensitive to sin, but he does not want to injure the sinner by broadcasting his sin.

(*To be continued*)

Go Not in Peace

by Tony Brouwer

ECONOMICS, like other courses in a Christian liberal arts college, is a discipline to be used to carry out the will of God. Together with other social sciences, it has contributed much to our knowledge of social interrelationships, and to our knowledge of the conflicts and problems present in those relationships. More than that, however, economics has, together with the other sciences, contributed much to our knowledge of how to help solve some of these problems.

As such, these study areas become extremely useful in carrying out the cultural mandate that human art be applied to the world of nature in order that God may be served. "Every creature," wrote Abraham Kuyper, "must serve man, so that man may serve his God. It is naught but primitive barbarism whenever human society, without higher control, is left to the course of nature. And so political art, taken in the higher sense, intervenes, so that out of this society a *community* may develop . . . and be ennobled."

One of the great and perennial barriers to the development of *community* among peoples has been the shameful inequality of opportunity existing among them: inequality of income, inequality of wealth, inequality of education, inequality of economic power, and inequality in freedom from bondage to the demands of physical existence — in short, *inequality in the opportunities for human development.* Perhaps an awareness of the severity of this problem has been dulled in many American minds by the prosperity prevailing in our own economy. But such complacency can only be explained by the phrase "opportunistic ignorance." Gunnar Myrdal, a well-known Swedish economist, states that "ignorance is seldom random, but instead, is highly opportunistic. In every country there have been whole systems of psychological and ideological barriers protecting the well-to-do classes from knowledge of social facts which would be embarrassing to them." The fact is available to anyone who wishes to know it that life-expectancy at birth in the United States is 70 years, that in Mexico, Egypt, and Chile it is 40 years, that in India it is only about 30 years; and that life-expectancy for whites in the United States is 7 years more than for non-whites. It can easily be discovered also that in a recent year the per capita annual income in Pakistan was $50, in Japan $100, in Puerto Rico $300 whereas in the United States it was $440.

Are these matters which should vex the Chris-

tian conscience? I suggest they are. Abraham Kuyper wrote in 1891, "Ostrich-politics is of no avail here; and it does no good when men *scoff* at the phrase 'justice for all'. . . . Nothing is more foolish than to see in the social question only a passing storm or a fleeting cloud."

But the troubled Christian conscience is the more perplexed, perhaps, by the immensity of the problem on the one hand, and by his own individual incapacity on the other. The query "What can I do about it?" is not *always* the alibi for neglect, because the problem of broadened opportunity is not merely a simple matter of personal or private charity. National poverty, in the present stage of economic complexity, is a *social* problem, a problem of international economic interdependence. National underdevelopment is a function of complex domestic and international relationships. Domestically, it is a function of the relative proportions of the factors of production, of the relationships between productivity, income, savings, and capital formation, and other conditions. Internationally, it is a function of the balance of payments, of capital movements, of currency stability, and other factors. And, of course, it is a function also of other non-economic, but related, factors such as lack of education, primitive traditions and superstitions, and domestic political oppression.

The failure of the Christian conscience does not lie primarily in the lack of personal charity. Myrdal, as a friendly foreign observer of America, states that the cultural trait that stands out among Americans is what he calls "Christian neighborliness." There is a basic sentiment of generosity toward those who are less fortunate. And the same thing, of course, can be said for the Christians in America. The humane or Christian granting of a gift to a Korean, however, is hardly sufficient to deal with the dilemma of underdevelopment. And such commendable generosity coupled with a complacent unconcern for social and economic problems may be regarded as a naive, and oversimplified view of modern life.

There is, one must recognize, a *social* dimension to the problems of poverty, and justice, and opportunity, and of *Christian* responsibility. The great failure of nineteenth-century capitalism was, undoubtedly, the lack of this recognition; and this failure was an important contributing factor to the spread of state socialism and communism as alternative social systems. Lack of recognition of this social dimension of inequality was also in large part the failure of the *Christian* community. And this failure may in part have accounted for the rise of modern liberal Christianity. If this be so, part of the blame for the rise of modernism may lie at the very door of the doctrinally orthodox Christian community.

What then *should* be the *Christian* approach to this question? Etienne Gilson, noted Catholic writer, states: "Piety never dispenses with technique. For technique is that without which even the most lively piety is incapable of using nature for God." The use of intelligence in the service of God requires, of course, that God's purposes for men as revealed in His Word be recognized and pursued. And so Gilson recommends theology to the scientist. But the use of intelligence in the service of God *also* requires that the knowledge of economic and social technique be employed in the context of contemporary conditions and institutions. And so Gilson recommends science to the theologian and to the Christian.

And what do these sciences tell us of this problem? They tell us, in the economic sphere, that the conditions which initially contributed to poverty may very well perpetuate and even intensify this poverty. They tell us that escape from the dilemma of underdevelopment cannot generally be achieved by nations acting by themselves. They tell us, for example, that the United States has been, and is, following harshly protectionist trade practices on its own behalf while preaching to the world, including the underdeveloped countries, the virtues of liberating trade from state interferences. They tell us that underdeveloped countries are in need of technical assistance programs, and of economic aid in the form of long-term loans and investments. They suggest the need for international agencies to promote currency stabilization and to encourage international investment.

These are but a few examples of types of programs which demand the support of the Christian community. These are a few examples, too, of what *Calvinism* must mean in the area of the social sciences; and where would it be more appropriate that this be recognized than at Calvin College and in the Christian Reformed community? The following tribute to the *potential* influence which Christianity can exercise in the social sphere is made by the philosopher Johann Fichte: "Christianity conceals in its womb a much greater treasure of rejuvenation than you surmise. Until now it has exerted its power only on the individual and only indirectly on the state. But anyone who, as believer or unbeliever, has been able to spy out its secret dynamic, must grant that Christianity can exert a wonderful *organizing* power on society also; and not until *this* power breaks through will the religion of the cross shine before the whole world in all the depths of its conception and in all the wealth of the blessings which it brings."

"If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit? (James 2:15,16)

The Grace of God

by James Daane

IN earlier articles (*The Perfection of God, The Righteousness of God*),[1] it was maintained that the perfection of God of which Matthew 5 speaks is that righteousness of God which is His grace toward the just and the unjust, the good and the evil. It was also stated that the distinctive quality of this righteousness of God lies not in the fact that it is indiscriminately gracious to both the evil *and the good,* but lies rather in the fact that it is gracious even to evil and unjust men. Out of this theological conception of the righteousness of God arises the ethical demand that the children of God love their enemies. When they do this, they are perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect. They reveal the possession of that righteousness which identifies them as children of the Father in heaven, and distinguishes them from scribe, Pharisee, publican, and heathen Gentile. They then have that righteousness which characterizes those who shall enter the kingdom of heaven.

The question must now be asked, *Is this grace* which expresses the perfect righteousness of God, bestows rain and sunshine upon the just and the unjust, enables God's children to love their enemies, identifies them as children of the Father, distinguishes them from those who are not, and grants entrance into the kingdom of heaven, *common grace?* Does the teaching of Matthew 5 provide a proof-text for the doctrine of common grace formulated by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in 1924?

THE primary intent of Matthew 5 is to describe in terms of human conduct the kind of righteousness which characterizes those who enter the kingdom of heaven. The righteousness of scribe and Pharisee is said to be insufficient. Those who enter the kingdom, it is said, must have a righteousness which exceeds that of scribe and Pharisee. The righteousness of publican and heathen Gentile is also judged as insufficient. It does not do enough, since it extends kindness and goodness only to those who reciprocate in kind. The righteousness of those entering the kingdom must "exceed" and "do more": it must love the enemy, bless him who curses, and pray for the persecutor. Doing this, the children of God are perfect as God is perfect. They reveal in their conduct that same perfect righteousness which God Himself reveals when He sends rain and sunshine upon the just and the unjust, upon the good and the evil.

Is this grace which expresses the perfect righteousness of God, common grace? The statement that it is, is not derived from the passage itself. It is rather a conclusion drawn from the argument that saving grace is particular grace, that is, for the elect alone, and that therefore this grace which comes through rain and sunshine, and thus upon all men, must be a non-particularistic grace, that is, common grace. Is the drawing of this conclusion warranted? I do not think it is.

That saving grace is particularistic, that is, for the elect alone, means that when and where God graciously intends the salvation of an individual, His will is accomplished. But this does not mean that the saving grace of God, which by divine intention saves only the elect, does not in fact touch the lives of the non-elect. Abraham Kuyper wrote a book in support of the thesis that saving grace is particularistic, but he quite readily admits that this grace of God touches the lives of non-elect individuals and indirectly affects the life of society for good. After all, Matthew 5 does not teach that God intends to save every individual whose life is touched by this grace which comes through rain and sunshine. Whether Matthew 5 teaches common grace will therefore have to be determined by the direct teaching of the chapter. Its value as a proof-text cannot be drawn from the consideration that saving grace saves only the elect. As long as it is commonly admitted — except by those who deny grace — that the saving grace of God can and does touch the lives of the non-elect for good without terminating in ultimate salvation, it ought also be recognized that a passage which teaches a grace of God which touches the lives of all men cannot be automatically regarded as a proof-text for common grace, that is, proof of a grace other than, and distinct from, saving grace.

Rather than to allow this chapter to teach no more than can be drained through the proposition "grace is particular," we must consider the direct and quite plain teaching of the chapter itself. When this is considered it becomes quite obvious that the thrust of the whole chapter contradicts the idea that the grace of God revealed in rain and sunshine is merely common grace. Construe the grace of which this chapter speaks as common grace, and one is confronted with insoluble difficulties regarding basic Biblical doctrines.

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1. *Reformed Journal,* Dec. 1958, and Jan. 1959.

If anything is clear, it is that the gracious and perfect righteousness of God which sends rain and sunshine upon the evil and the good, the just and the unjust, is the *same* righteousness which in the lives of God's children constitutes them perfect as God is perfect, and which accounts for the fact that they love their enemies, bless those who curse them, and pray for those who persecute them. Surely this conduct of the children of God, which is their peculiar righteousness and a reflection in their lives of the perfection of their Father in heaven, is not a conduct which is accounted for, and to be regarded as an expression of a mere common grace! Does it appear plausible that a chapter which develops its great theme of righteousness (the righteousness of the kingdom), by presenting Jesus' sharpened demand of the Law, and which climaxes it by describing the perfection of God, is simply speaking of common grace? They who make the "rain and sunshine" passage a proof-text for common grace, seem never to have faced the problem which such an interpretation posits for Ethics, namely, the task of explaining the peculiar perfection of the children of God, the perfection by which they love their enemies, surpass the righteousness of scribe and Pharisee, publican and heathen Gentile, and possess what is required for entrance into the kingdom of heaven, *in terms of common grace*. If this task can be taken care of merely in terms of common grace, then there is no need for special grace, nor could common grace be distinguished from it. Here perhaps lies one of the reasons why the proponents of common grace have long had trouble knowing what to do with common grace as it relates to Christian life and Christian conduct. Surely that distinctive righteousness which identifies the children of God and distinguishes them from Pharisee and heathen, and grants entrance into the kingdom of God, can only be accounted for in terms of the *highest* grace of God.

THE concluding verses of Matthew 5 teach a perfection of God which is His righteousness, a righteousness which is His grace toward even *sinful* men. Had the Synod of 1924 insisted on the acceptance of this truth, namely, that the very perfection of God is revealed in His grace toward sinful men, it could well have been sufficient unto the day. For this above all else was the issue at stake. For they who denied common grace, did so for the wrong reason. They did it on the theological platform that God hates sinners and only loves the elect because they alone in Christ are righteous. What was at stake in 1924 was not common grace, but grace itself, the very heart of the gospel. This, and nothing less! Had this but been recognized and faced! But it was not faced, presumably because it was not recognized. When, not some peripheral aspect, but the very essence of the gospel was threatened, the orthodoxy of the times was not sufficiently sensitive and vital to recognize it. If only it had been. It could then have appealed to the concluding verses of Matthew 5 as a sure defense of that very essence of the gospel under threat. For this passage is indeed a proof-text for the truth that God has grace for sinful, evil men. With an intuitive sense for what was Biblical, but unseeing, alas, as to the actual issue at stake, appeal was made to Matthew 5 in an effort to make it carry a load it cannot bear. For while it teaches the nature of grace, it does not teach that there is another, a second, essentially different grace, namely, common grace.

IT is generally admitted that Luke 6:36,37 is a parallel passage to that in Matthew 5. Professor Fred Klooster of Calvin Seminary has recently asserted that Luke 6 (together with Matthew 5) is the best proof-text the Christian Reformed churches have for the doctrine of common grace. I agree that they are parallel passages, for both passages teach the same thing. The language differs somewhat, but the teaching is identical. Matthew asserts that the child of God must be perfect as the Father is perfect; Luke asserts that the child of God must be merciful as the Father is merciful. In Matthew the perfection of God is that righteousness of God which is His grace toward sinful men; Luke describes this perfection of God as "mercy" and declares that God is kind "toward the unthankful and evil." Both are describing the same grace of God, and both are insisting that this grace must determine the conduct of the children of God. But this very fact suggests that the passage in Luke is a proof-text for the position that Matthew 5 is not speaking of common grace.

It is not without reason that, of the two passages, Matthew 5 has become the more popular among both theologians and laymen as a proof-text for common grace. The reason lies to hand. Matthew mentions "rain and sunshine" as the expression of God's grace. Luke, however, neither employs this phrase, nor any comparable phrase, in his description of the grace of God. To one looking for a proof-text for common grace, the phrase "rain and sunshine" seems made to order, for it can be used for the argument that the blessings of this grace are merely "natural blessings," and since they come upon all men, are common blessings issuing from a common grace.

It ought to be remembered, however, that common grace is by definition something "besides" the saving grace of God shown to the elect (cf. the First of the Three Points), and an *other* and *second* grace of God which is *essentially different* (cf.

Berkhof's *Systematic Theology*) than saving grace. But if this is true, then Luke 6 can hardly be used as a proof-text for common grace. Luke's statement that God is kind toward the unthankful and evil, is a very proper description of the nature of the saving grace of God. It is only because God is merciful and kind to unthankful and evil men, that any man is saved. But if Luke is giving a very proper description of the nature of divine grace by which men are saved and without which no man can be saved, it is a very questionable procedure simply to designate this grace as a non-saving, common grace.

Everything that Luke says about the grace or mercy of God in this passage can very aptly and properly be predicated of the saving grace of God. But if Luke is in fact speaking of common grace, a second and other grace, one which differs essentially from saving grace, and yet says absolutely nothing to indicate that he is describing a common grace, then Luke's description of the grace of which he speaks is quite reliable, and at best very misleading. No professor in Calvin Seminary requesting a student in an examination to give a definition of common grace would regard an answer as acceptable which said nothing more about common grace than Luke says in this passage.

If the mention of "rain and sunshine" in the Matthew account is the clinching argument that Matthew provides us with a proof-text for common grace, then in his parallel passage Luke is a poor and misleading theologian, since he describes the same grace without using this or any comparable phrase. But if Luke's description of the grace of God as kindness to the unthankful and evil is an inspired and adequate description of this grace, then no additional detail provided by Matthew in a parallel passage can be used to prove that Luke is describing another, second, and essentially different grace of God than that which comes in Christ. Indeed, Luke's declared purpose in writing this gospel is to declare the things "which have been fulfilled among us" in Jesus Christ" (Luke 1:1).

What would one think of a Christian Reformed minister or seminary professor who in describing common grace would say nothing to indicate that the grace whereof he spoke was merely common, non-particularistic, and non-saving, essentially different from the grace of God in Jesus Christ? If then Luke was an inspired and infallible theologian, may, rather, must we not assume that in speaking of common grace he would have indicated that he was not speaking of that essentially different grace of God in Christ? And since he does not do so, and since in this passage, which is obviously parallel to the Matthew passage, he is speaking of the same grace of which Matthew speaks, must we not conclude that neither this, nor the Matthew passage, speaks of common grace, and that neither therefore can be regarded as a proof-text for common grace?

Meeting the Challenge of the Post-Christian Age

by Peter De Jong

In the April 1958 *Reformed Journal* there appeared an article by Rev. Hugh A. Koops under the title, "The Challenge of the Post-Christian Age." As I read the article I could sympathize with the home missionary making a new beginning in a work so different from the routine requirements of many established churches. One does not have to do much of such work before he realizes that we of the Christian Reformed Church have much to learn from the Apostle Paul, who wrote, "To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews. . . . I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some" (I Cor. 9:20-22). We are thankful to God for the many signs that our churches are awakening to their local missionary responsibilities, of which Rev. Koops' article is another evidence.

At the same time, the reading of the article aroused in my mind serious apprehensions. It exemplified, to an unusual degree, it seemed to me, the very great dangers that confront the Christian Reformed Church in its present missionary awakening.

The Suggested Changes

The writer first describes "the post-Christian age" and tries to distinguish it in principle quite sharply from the pre-Christian and Christian men-

talities. Then he proceeds to suggest that dealing with this post-Christian mind requires some radical changes in the churches' missionary methods. The message must be unchanged. But "meeting the post-Christian mind demands a change on the part of the church, a change so drastic that many will fear that the church herself will disappear." The author lists an imposing number of ways in which the church must change.

(1) "The post-Christian mind desires a change in the form of the worship services . . . . to give it an informality in keeping with modern suburbia. The informal discussion rather than the formal sermon is demanded by the post-Christian mind."

(2) "Also, in an age in which there is little respect for authority, it would be wise to avoid a display of ecclesiastical or ministerial authority."

(3) The writer suggests also a change in the form of the message, abandoning "the explicit use of a creed." The traditional use of the Heidelberg Catechism will certainly not do. "If a creed is to be used at all, the Belgic Confession should be used. It is to be questioned, however, whether the way of wisdom recommends the explicit use of a creed at all. . . . If doctrine is to be presented at all (as it must), it must be done in such a way as to show its relevance to life."

(4) He suggests, further, the abandonment of textual preaching, because "the common practice of preaching from a text, though dearly loved by the Christian, may be and frequently is repulsive to the post-Christian." To support this idea he points out that Paul in preaching to pagans "used for his text an inscription on a pagan altar and a quotation from a pagan poet." Furthermore, the writer questions "how pertinent are the methods used by Paul," since he was speaking not to post-Christians but to pre-Christians! Instead of being guided by Paul's methods he suggests that "we must display Paul's reliance on the Holy Spirit in discovering how we are to speak in the modern world."

(5) Finally, the author suggests that we must change our requirements for church membership. We may not ask for more than mere "confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior." The meaning of this confession will have to be translated into post-Christian terms. Although the Scriptural meaning must be retained, the words must be changed to suit the new age. In view of this principle the churches' old stand on exclusion of freemasonry and divorce will have to be altered.

It is apparent that following these suggestions would bring revolutionary changes in the life of our churches. Would they not weaken or destroy the churches? The author reassures us that "it is only in losing herself in this way that she shall find herself. This is precisely the glory of the church, that she can spend herself and be spent in her Master's service."

While I appreciate the concern and thought that the writer has given to the increasingly important matter of our home missionary outlook, I am convinced both on the basis of God's Word and my own limited but growing missionary experience which goes back over almost two decades, that these proposals embody serious fallacies. They are especially serious because they are becoming widely accepted, and because, if they are put into practice they will likely indeed destroy the church, but not with the result of saving it, which the Lord certainly intends and the writer also undoubtedly desires.

Must We Change to Meet the Post-Christian Mind?

In the first place, while there are certain differences in the mentality of various ages and the church certainly needs to take this into account in approaching people, it is open to question whether one can distinguish in other than a superficial fashion any such new "post-Christian" mind as the writer tries to do. Our Lord Himself confronted the formalistic, legalistic Pharisees who knew their Bibles and rejected Him, and the supercilious Sadducees who felt themselves much too wise and intellectual to take seriously such antiquated religious notions as He proposed. Especially the latter strike one as about as similar to many of our "post-Christian" intellectuals as anyone could be. And the more I confront the latter, the more I am impressed by the way the Lord exploded their pretentions by observing that the cause of their error was that they knew "neither the scriptures nor the power of God" (Mark 12:24). Pre- or post-Christian, or within the Christian church, human nature is essentially the same. It remains true that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged" (I Cor. 2:14).

While we should, with the Apostle, try to avoid arousing people's prejudices needlessly by our personal or group idiosyncrasies, we must also always be on guard against letting the prejudices and tastes of those with whom we deal ("the natural man") determine the character of the message we bring. Paul in dealing with the intellectual Greeks deliberately refused to meet them in the way Rev. Mr. Koops seems to advocate. He said, "Seeing that Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock, and unto Gentiles foolishness. . . . And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not

with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. . . . And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstrations of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (I Cor. 1:22, 23; 2:1, 4, 5).

Mr. Koops, indeed, wants to alter only the methods, not the message. The trouble with such a distinction is that in presenting the gospel the message and the method cannot be separated — as the lesson from I Cor. 1 and 2 so strikingly points out. The method must never be permitted to compromise or contradict the message. In principle the method, too, must be determined by the Word of God, not by the prejudices of the people to whom it is to be brought.

Mr. Koops would have us be guided not by the methods of Paul, since he was speaking to pre-Christians, not to post-Christians, but rather by "Paul's reliance on the Holy Spirit in discovering how we are to speak in the modern world." But this is to dismiss far too casually what God's Word and the Spirit who authored it have to teach us by Paul's method in meeting the non-Christian mind. This also is "written for our learning." The gospel is word as well as fact revelation. Paul cautions Timothy: "Hold the pattern of sound words which thou hast heard from me in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (II Tim. 1:13). Not merely the message, but the methods and even words of bringing it have been inspired. If that is the case, have we any right by any kind of argument from expediency to try to free ourselves from them?

It should not escape our notice in this connection that the policy of leaving the words and forms of the Bible in an effort to meet the modern mind (while of course wishing to retain the message) has been exactly characteristic of the modernist and more recently, the neo-orthodox movements within the church of our time. A contemporary writer like Bultmann, who wants to divest the Christian faith of its antiquated "myths," avowedly does not want to sacrifice the faith itself; he only wants to make it more palatable to the modern mind. Yet in his whole system he has lost the gospel.

I am sure that Mr. Koops does not want to do anything of this kind. But the fact is that in setting out on the road his article recommends we would be beginning to make the same kind of concessions modernism and neo-orthodoxy do. And when one once begins to make this journey, where does one stop? The appeal to the Holy Spirit does not guarantee sound evangelism when one no longerer binds himself to the Word of God. I once heard a minister welcome "all heretics" into his church on the basis that we may not in any way try to "fence in" the work of the Holy Spirit. "The heresy of one generation," said he, "is the progress of the next." Once the Word of God is abandoned in more or less degree there is no standard left by which to "try the spirits whether they be of God." The popular opinion in the church or the private opinion of the preacher are hardly adequate substitutes, as the tragic state of scores of churches around us aptly demonstrate.

How Shall We Change the Service?

LOOKING at the suggested change in the form of the worship service, we may observe that a measure of informality is a desirable and common practice in much missionary endeavor, and the Word of God certainly seems to leave room for it (see I Cor. 14, for example). To carry this to the length of substituting an informal discussion for a sermon and to eliminate the note of authority, however, radically alters the character of the message as well as the method. To be sure, there is and must be room for discussion in dealing with people, and we need to rid ourselves of the notion (if we have it) that we are any better than the people with whom we deal, and in a missionary work there is no room for ecclesiastical pomposity (if there is room for it anywhere — which I doubt). But the worship into which the missionary is endeavoring to lead his contact must not be permitted to degenerate into a mere informal discussion lest it lose the very character of worship! And the gospel, however personally unassuming its preacher ought to be, must never be proposed as a mere tentative suggestion for the unbeliever's (be he pre- or post-Christian) consideration. It is and in the nature of the case must always remain an authoritative declaration of God! To make it less than that is to deny its very character, and to weaken, not strengthen, its impact. We shall certainly not gain men's respect by reducing the Word of God to a preacher's suggestion calculated to be acceptable to an unbelieving audience! Such a change of method as this would render ineffective and destroy our churches just as surely as it has destroyed scores of other churches who have tried it.

Missionary experience seems to underscore this point. I remember a Marine chaplain who in view of the scepticism of his men tried to lead them to the Christian faith by turning his services into apologetic lectures calculated to argue them into believing. He was a sadly disappointed preacher. On the other hand, I shall not soon forget the re-

mark of a local former "post-Christian" who said: "What attracted me to this church is the fact that this is the only one I've run across in which people seem to come for the religion and not just for sociability."

It just is not true that the churches that are the most pliable and ready to meet the "post-Christian mind" in the ways suggested are the most effective evangelists. There is much more evidence for the fact that those which are most vigorously and without apology preaching the gospel as they believe it are growing the fastest — and whether they have much or little formal ritual seems to have little to do with it! Consider, for example, such widely different churches as the Missouri Lutherans and the Southern Baptists. One has much ritual, the other has little or none, but they have this in common that they are both about as forthrightly and even exclusively denominational in their church and gospel emphasis as any I have encountered. Surely it is not coincidence that both are among the most aggressively and effectively evangelistic Protestant organizations in the country. They are both, on the whole, enthusiastically and uncompromisingly concerned about the gospel and busily bringing it, and the Lord has signally prospered the witness of both with exceptional growth.

How Shall We Change the Preaching?

THE same criticism I have made of the suggested change in worship applies to the suggested change in preaching. We are advised to abandon the explicit use of creeds as well as the appeal to Scripture texts in deference to the fact that the post-Christian mind does not like them. If that were true, it would be no reason for abandoning these practices, as we have already seen. The assumption that the churches' witness is more effective if it shies away from creeds ought to be challenged, however. One recalls the remarks of Dorothy Sayers in her little book *Creed or Chaos*, pp. 29, 30): "The reason why the Churches are discredited today is not that they are too bigoted about theology, but that they have run away from theology." People today are asking for answers and if the Christian church is going to get a hearing it must come with answers that clearly express what it believes — its creed, and the gospel from which that creed is derived. When the witness to the gospel is our mission to the world, entrusted to us by the Lord, what conceivable good can be accomplished by trying to evade, as though we were ashamed of it, telling that world exactly what the Word of God says and that we believe it? Yet that is what these suggested changes seem to involve. I am persuaded both by the Scriptures and a growing missionary experience that we may hope to be most effective not when we try to cover up our confession of faith or our reliance on the Word of God, but when we try to make both as clear and unmistakable as possible.

It is these two, sometimes criticized, practices — our insisting on tying the message of the minister to the churches' confession of faith (the Heidelberg Catechism), on the one hand, and to the text of the Word of God, on the other hand — that have under the blessing of God helped to keep the faith and life of the church as relatively sound as it is, while so many other organizations, some with the same traditional faith, have slipped until even the church leaders no longer know the gospel or its power.

If we are to abandon our traditional practice of catechetical and textual preaching, what will determine the character of the preaching? Will it not be the whims and hobbies of the preachers? Would anyone care to maintain, however well-intentioned the preachers may be, that that is a safer guide to the churches' preaching and witness than the Word of God and the churches' confessed faith in it? We are experiencing to an increasing degree that it is just this insistence on preaching the truths of the gospel as the Word of God teaches them and the church confesses them that is beginning to attract people from many other quarters to our church. They testify that they have come to find in it that which they have sought in vain in others. Could there be a more foolish or destructive course for us than to throw away the very features of our church life and practice that are our greatest assets?

Perhaps the intent of the article at this point was to suggest that we try to avoid the dry scholasticism that is reputed to characterize some catechetical and some textual preaching. If our practice needs correction, let us correct, not abandon it. Again I am reminded of the apt phrasing of Dorothy Sayers (p. 32): "It is not true at all that dogma is 'hopelessly irrelevant' to the life and thought of the average man. What is true is that ministers of the Christian religion often assert that it is, present it for consideration as though it were, and, in fact, by their faulty exposition of it make it so." Let us present our creed on the basis of God's Word and let creed and Scripture always be related to life. That is the course the Word of God charts for the churches' missionary witness in this as in every other time.

Must We Change Membership Requirements?

Furthermore, it seems to me that the suggestions that we change our requirements for church mem-

bership — suggestions heard in various quarters of the denomination recently — need to be critically analyzed in the light of the Word of God. The article states that "faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, in the Scriptural sense of the word, is all the church may demand," and implies that the church demands much more than this and is wrong in doing so. If we actually look at "faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior in the Scriptural sense of the word," we find that it turns out to be something quite different from the simple demand that Rev. Koops and others who share his opinion have assumed it to be.

Let us turn to just one unusually clear example of the teaching of the Bible on this subject, the passage so frequently used to stress the missionary outreach of the church, in which are found the words, "Go into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled" (Luke 14:23). This text, indeed, stresses the need to go out in a missionary way and bring man in, as we have too often neglected to do, but even a casual reading of the passage shows that it does not at all teach the conclusion drawn from it, that therefore the demands for admission to Christ's church must be lowered. In fact, it teaches the very opposite! Read the rest of the sentence: "For I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper." This is not an invitation but an exclusion! And who are excluded? The man who put his field (v. 18), the man who put his oxen (v. 19) and the man who put his newly married wife (v. 20) in the way of the Lord's invitation. All those were kept out.

This is told us even more plainly in the next ten verses. There we read that Jesus turned to the multitudes who followed Him and instead of trying to persuade them to make a quick decision as modern evangelists usually do, He said, "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. . . . Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." An explanation is given of this seeming strange demand. A man going to build a tower first counts the cost; a king going to war first considers what kind of project he is beginning; otherwise both might begin but never finish their venture.

What is the purpose of all of this? Isn't Jesus interested in converts? Of course, He is, but He is only interested in real ones. "Salt therefore is good," but if the salt has lost its taste, it is absolutely worthless. The Christian church in general by its one-sided evangelistic persuasion and its almost complete neglect to emphasize these standards so plainly set up by the Lord, has packed its membership rolls with "converts" who are like the builder who never finishes his building, the king who quits fighting, the salt that has lost its taste. That kind of evangelism, however good its intentions, has wrecked rather than strengthened the testimony of the large share of the church that has gone in for it. To fill the church with unconverted who balk at the demand of complete loyalty to Christ is plainly not what the Word of God teaches at all and tears down rather than builds up the work of the Lord.

Yet that is exactly what Rev. Koops in this article and others seem to be advocating that our church in its newborn evangelistic zeal should do. The demands that we as a church make are, in general, *not* more rigid than those of the Lord Himself. A look at our membership leads rather to the question whether ours are in many cases not *less* rather than more rigid than they ought to be. In view of a text like that just quoted, can one say that we must demand that one give up father or mother or land or life for Christ's sake, but *not* the fellowship of an organization that teaches a pagan religion and contradicts the Christian's profession of faith? Is not that a little ridiculous? Is it not high time for us to discard such nonsense currently too often being proposed in the name of promoting missions?

I appreciate Mr. Koops' zeal for missions. But I sincerely hope that he and our church as a whole will not move in the direction he proposes. I am sure that to do so is to abandon the clear teaching of the Word of God, which is as relevant to our age as to any other, and will result as it has in the case of other churches in the development of a gospel not worth listening to and in a church not worth joining. That will not promote the gospel or build up the church of Christ.

It is good, as Mr. Koops also desires, that we analyze critically our old habits and traditions and adjust and improve them to meet the demands of God's Word and the purpose for which Christ has sent us into the world; but let us insist that the Lord by His Word, not the world, shall determine both the message we bring and the method by which we bring it. Let us again be guided not only by the Holy Spirit that led Paul but also by the way that Holy Spirit led him and clearly guides the church through the Word of God. With Paul may we learn to say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Rom. 1:16).

Meeting, or Missing, the Post-Christian Age

by Hugh A. Koops

THE most difficult task ever faced by the Christian missionary is the task of translation. This difficult task is the first task to which the missionary addresses himself. He begins his work by a study of the language and the culture of the people to whom he would bring the message of redemption through Jesus Christ only. This is no easy task. Yet it is a very necessary task. For the sake of this task the missionary withdraws from his culture and enters another. He must learn the language of the mission-object before he can speak with and to him.

While this task of translation is easily recognized when the foreign missionary is involved, it is very easily obscured when the preparation of the home missionary is considered. The reason for this oversight is very obvious: it is immediately assumed that both the home missionary and the mission-object speak the same language. But the problem is not at all so simple. For while both follow the same rules of grammar and use the same words, they frequently do not mean the same thing. The task of translation remains. The terms used by the Christian missionary are "nonsense-syllables" to many a mission-object; or, what is worse, they are filled with anti-Christian connotations. Such simple concepts as guilt, saving, judging, and confession — to omit terms more strictly theological — demand translation.

One of the easiest things for the church to do is to overlook this task of translation as she attempts to carry on a program of domestic evangelism. She can very easily assume that there is really little difference between the thought-patterns of the Christian and those of the contemporary world citizen. The church can say that the differences are really very small; that one cannot distinguish "in other than a superficial fashion any such new 'post-Christian' mind."

But this is becoming increasingly more difficult to do. Commentators on the modern scene, Christian and non-Christian, are recognizing significant characteristics of our modern civilizations which mark the age as post-Christian. The church can neglect these analyses only at her peril. Alfred North Whitehead has written:

> Protestant Christianity, so far as concerns the institutional and dogmatic forms in which it flourished for three hundred years as derived from Luther, Calvin, and the Anglican Settlement, is showing all the signs of steady decay. Its dogmas no longer dominate; its divisions no longer interest; its institutions no longer direct the patterns of life.

It must, of course, be admitted that America today does not represent the vanguard of the post-Christian age. This dubious honor she cannot claim. Likely it is Germany that has done the most to foster the post-Christian mind which holds so much of Europe today. But we must not overlook America's movement in this direction. America is no longer the Christian nation she occasionally compliments herself for being. This is becoming increasingly evident in those centers where the future leaders of our country are now preparing for the roles of leadership. All one need do for confirmation is visit the liberal arts departments of our state universities.

Moreover, this analysis of our age is not only the rejoicing of those who are happy to see Protestant Christianity in its institutional forms on the decline. Christians, particularly in Europe, are reckoning with the post-Christian age. They can see the handwriting on the wall: "Christianity, your days are numbered. You have been weighed in the balances and found wanting. Your kingdom is divided and given to secularism and communism." Tom Allan, in his excellent little book, *The Face of My Parish,* has collected many comments on the evangelical prospects of Christianity in Europe. He quotes these words from Dr. Cyril Garbett:

> The influence which the Church once had on the nation has diminished . . . religion is now the concern of a small section of its people; its claim for the whole of life is no longer made with any confidence, and only very rarely treated as serious.

And he quotes these from the French priest-workman, Victor Dillard:

> What was I to do? What was I to say to them? I felt that I was a stranger to them — that I belonged to another culture. My liturgy, my theology, my prayers, my priestly dress — all cut me off from them and made me a being apart. Can Christ have lost his power of attracting or the strength that he is able to communicate to others? Or are we at the end of time, when charity hardly exists on the earth? Am I — with a handful of those like me — an isolated being — one who has found the pearl of great price, and has to keep the secret to himself?

It seems to me that the church in America could profit greatly from the experiences of fellow Christians in Europe. Few today seriously question the coming of the post-Christian age. But are we willing to make ready for it? Then let us learn from those who now find themselves hard pressed to make preparations so late.

THE Rev. Peter De Jong in an article which appears in this same issue of the *Journal*, suggests that there is little novel in the post-Christian age. The Pharisees and the Sadducees and the intellectual Greeks seem, to him, very similar to the post-Christian. It is true that there are similarities. As Rev. De Jong says, "human nature is essentially the same." The post-Christian, the Pharisee, Sadducee, and Greek are all men. But there are differences between men, differences so great that translation becomes necessary. The question is really this: is the post-Christian age sufficiently unique to demand a new translation of the message?

In his article, "Christian Action in America," as reprinted in the collection of essays entitled *Responsible Protestantism*, the late Dr. Cecil De Boer pointed out the difficulties in comparing the intellectual Greek with the post-Christian:

> The antagonism which Christianity faces today, even within our own land, appears to be something altogether different from, say, the antagonism which St. Paul had in mind when he wrote that the gospel was foolishness to the Greeks. After all, the antagonism of the Greeks toward the gospel does not appear to have been something final. The Greek intellectual, for example, seems to have regarded the Christian religion as just another one of the many mystery religions then in vogue in the Mediterranean world. And it is evident that the Athenians regarded St. Paul as simply a dilettante attempting to gain adherents to this new mystery religion. Anyway, it was not a foregone conclusion that the gospel would merely rebound from hopelessly closed minds even in a city such as Athens. The gospel had a chance, so to speak, to be a "savor of life unto life."
>
> The antagonism of today's secular intellectual, on the other hand, has an altogether different stamp. For it reflects a civilization which has known the Christian way of life and has rejected it; a civilization which has transformed itself into a wholly secular culture, and which in so doing may have committed a corporate sin unto death.

Now the Pharisees and the Sadducees are likely much closer to the post-Christian mind. At least they have a background of covenantal fellowship behind them. But again there is an important difference. In speaking with the Pharisees and the Sadducees Jesus could resort to the Scriptures. Even the Sadducees listened to the Law. There was a common authority recognized by all, and it was against this common tradition that Jesus could reveal their hypocrisy. But the authority of Scripture is meaningless to the post-Christian. The Pharisees and the Sadducees had at least searched the Scriptures; this the post-Christian has no desire to do.

Perhaps these brief remarks concerning the nature of the post-Christian age and this brief comparison with the Greek intellectual and the Jewish intellectual will help to clarify what is meant by the post-Christian age. It is unfortunate this was not made more apparent in my original article. I did not at that time think it necessary, assuming that I was working with a term commonly understood. But evidently Rev. De Jong and I do not mean the same thing by the term. He comments about the former post-Christian who said: "What attracted me to this church is the fact that this is the only one I've run across in which people seem to come for the religion and not just for sociability." Indeed, the matter would be very simple should the post-Christian desire to come to church for religion. But the post-Christian has little concern for religion, particularly for a religion which comes to expression through the church.

WHAT seems most disturbing to many, including Rev. De Jong, is the fact that the post-Christian mind calls for certain changes on the part of the church. If the post-Christian mind required no changes in the church we would not be disturbed by this challenge. But perhaps the word *change* is an unfortunate choice. Maybe it would be more helpful to talk about a *translation* to meet the post-Christian age. At least this word more clearly describes the nature of the change; a change in method, not message; in form, not content.

I take it that Rev. De Jong objects to this distinction between method and message. In presenting the gospel the method and the message cannot be separated, he says. But I do not understand why this should be. I fail to see that this is so strikingly pointed out by I Corinthians 1 and 2, or by the reference to the "pattern of sound words," a pattern which I assumed to be found in the structure of the message rather than in the method of presenting the message.

Perhaps Rev. De Jong is concerned about the distinction between method and message because he feels that this is a product of either liberal thought or neo-orthodox thought. I can understand his concern for any movement towards either liberalism or neo-orthodoxy. But I do not believe that I am trying to make the gospel palatable to the modern mind; I would only make it understandable in the sense that men may know what Christianity says, though they may not believe it. The post-Christian is not to judge the gospel, to see whether

t tastes well. He is rather to be judged by the gospel, to know what it says about him.

REV. De Jong objects to a change in liturgy. I wonder whether he would object to a translation in liturgy. We are thankful that today most people know that authority is not guaranteed merely by the presence of external forms. The position, the dress, and the language of the preacher do not guarantee authority. His authority resides in his witness to the truth. Now if this can be done, and I suggest that in our day it can be done, without the position behind the pulpit, without clerical dress, and without the use of Latin, Hebrew, or Greek, then there is little reason for the retention of these features. And when these features are scorned, as they are by the post-Christian, they can best be abandoned. Says Rev. De Jong: "The worship . . . must not be permitted to degenerate into a mere informal discussion lest it lose the very character of worship." These words I simply do not understand. They even sound subversive of our Reformed faith. I thought the Reformed view of life insisted that all of life, and this includes informal discussion (which is certainly a larger if not more significant portion of modern life than the formal worship service), must be worship. And surely the individual participation which is found in many an informal discussion is much closer to worship than the individual non-participation in many a formal service.

It is true, as Rev. De Jong points out, that many churches using a formal liturgy are growing today. But let us not make growth our standard of judgment. Moreover, it has not been established that these churches are meeting the growing challenge of the post-Christian mind. And it is noteworthy that even such liturgical churches as the Roman Catholic and Episcopalian are making changes to meet this age (cf. especially *Revolution in a City Parish*, by Abbe G. Michonneau, Chapter II, "A Living, *Apostolic Liturgy*".) Moreover, even the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, mentioned by Rev. De Jong, is becoming greatly concerned about this problem (cf. *The Lutheran Witness*, Dec. 2, 1958, "Our Lutheran Worship," p. 16, and "Extremes in Liturgy," p. 19).

REV. De Jong also objects to a change in preaching, and he here criticizes the suggestions to avoid explicit use of the creeds as well as the appeal to specific texts in Scripture. "It is these two . . . practices," he says, "that have under the blessing of God helped to keep the faith and life of the church as relatively sound as it is." Obviously this is true, as long as "soundness" is defined as being explicit adherence to the creeds and the text of Scripture. But neither quotations from Scripture nor quotations from the creeds guarantee orthodoxy. Quotations may but make a message *sound* "sound."

A criticism of creedal preaching, or of doctrinal preaching, or of textual preaching, is not necessarily a criticism of the creeds, of doctrine, or of Scripture. The creeds are very useful. Doctrine we must proclaim. There is nothing else worth preaching, as Dorothy Sayers says so well. And our message must be Biblical. It is not the creeds nor the Scriptures that we would criticize, but their use in addressing the post-Christian era.

It is futile to suppose that we can lead the unbeliever to belief by an appeal either to a text or to a creed, particularly if he accepts neither. We cannot use either the text or the creed to force the unbeliever to believe. We cannot make him believe because the church believes, or because the saints have believed. Texts and creeds have their place, as long as they are used to state what the Bible says and what the church believes. But what eventually saves the individual is not the fact that it is the Bible that says this, or that it is the creeds that say this, but the fact that what the Bible says and what the creeds say is true, namely, that Jesus saves. It is the message, the gospel, that frees from sin, for that gospel is Jesus Christ. It is but secondary that this message is carried by the creeds and by the doctrines, by the texts and by the Scriptures.

I cannot overlook the fact that when Paul speaks to those who accept the Scriptures he uses them, and when he speaks to those who do not accept the Scriptures he does not make explicit use of them.

FINALLY, Rev. De Jong objects to a change in membership requirements. It would also object, if by change is meant either a raising or a lowering of the standards of the Christian. Too often the discussion around membership requirements slips into a discussion as to whether the requirements must be raised or lowered. But I think this is a faulty construction of the problem. We do not alter, we do not raise or lower, the standards. They have been set by the Head of the Church. All we do is translate the definition of a Christian, and the requirements for church membership, into the language of the culture in which the church resides.

My aim is not "to fill the church with unconverted," as Rev. De Jong supposes. My aim is not to make the requirements for church membership easier to meet. It is not a question of making it easier or more difficult. It is rather a question of honesty. Do the requirements for church membership adequately correspond with the definition of the Christian? And does the understanding of the

world concerning the Christian adequately correspond with what the Christian tries to be?

Here it becomes important for the church to know what the world understands by her definition of a Christian. Thus it is not enough for the church to know what she means by marriage, or by divorce, or by Freemasonry. The church must also know what the world means by marriage, by divorce, and by Freemasonry. The church examines the creed of the Mason and finds it anti-Christian. This I do not question. But I do wonder whether the church has the right to say of the Mason that he is not a Christian, that he cannot be a member of the church. For many a Mason is ignorant of the anti-Christian creed of the lodge, just as many a member is ignorant of the Christian creed of the church. The Mason frequently does not join the lodge because of an anti-Christian commitment; more frequently he joins to enjoy the sociability the lodge offers, or because the lodge is anti-Catholic, or because it offers security, or because it is a lot of fun, or because of the business and professional contacts it provides. Thus we must reexamine what we mean when we say that a Mason cannot be a member of the church. And then we must speak, neither raising nor lowering the requirements of church membership, but simply being honest in saying what it means to be a Christian.

And then let us speak on topics which are much more relevant in defining Christianity today. Dare we take a stand on the race problem? I suggest we should, not because it is easier, or because it is more difficult, but simply because it is only honest that the church state what it means to be a Christian today.

The basic question is this: Shall we use the language of the Mason or shall we use the language of the church? Do we speak the language of the world or the language of the kingdom? Some would say, as Rev. De Jong says: Let the world learn our language. We need not adjust to an age we cannot understand. They must learn our liturgy. They must accept our creeds as we have accepted them. They must read the Bible in the language we have learned to love.

But it is this I cannot say. The message of the gospel is that God learned our language, that He spoke our words, that He adapted Himself to our situation without compromising on what He wants us to become, that, "being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." And because his Lord did this. Paul could do nothing else but "become all things to all men," that he might "by all means save some." As the church of Jesus Christ we can do nothing else.

DOCTOR ZHIVAGO — and His Patient

by CORNELIUS VAN ZWOLL, Assistant Professor of Modern Languages, Calvin College.

A review of the best-selling Russian novel, *Doctor Zhivago*, by Boris Pasternak, translated by Max Hayward and Manya Harrari. Published by Pantheon, New York, 1958. 559 pages, $5.00.

"Just fancy, we were wrong. Congratulations." Thus casually, after an autopsy, Dr. Yuri Zhivago's correct diagnosis is acknowledged. Throughout Boris Pasternak's novel, Yuri Zhivago is presented literally as a professional person competent to diagnose medically, and symbolically as a moral person competent to diagnose socially.

Introduction

The novel begins with the death of Yuri's mother in 1901 and ends about 1950, twenty years after Zhivago's own death. Thus deliberately Russia and human life in a most momentous era are called upon to deliver up their meaning and mystery. The interaction of historical and personal developments in this half-century produces the fabric which makes *Doctor Zhivago* a memorable work.

As an art form, this novel demands attention to its technical organization, its significance and persuasiveness. Because it concerns Soviet society and is condemned by the Soviet Government, the contemporary Western world inescapably fastens hungry eyes on the social and political ideas in the novel. Moreover, dynamic ideas in the realms of art, history, society, and in the ultimate areas of religion and philosophy are expressed. Again, the persons of the novel are the children, the subjects and the judges of their era, and the question of the survival of unwarped human values in such personalities is of prime interest.

The importance of the individual is already indicated by the title. "Dr. Zhivago" is the name of a man, in contrast to, e.g., *War and Peace*, *Crime and Punishment*, or, from the Communist world, *Not By Bread Alone* and *The New Class*. Selecting a man as Man is in the good tradition of Job, the Odyssey, the Aeneid, the Cid, Faust. It is also in the tradition of Alexander Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* and Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. Pasternak has a great fondness for both these compatriots. "Zhiv" means living; "ago-nya" is agony or death struggle. The focus is at once on the person and personality, the life and the spirit of the individual. This is directly congenial to the democratic and Protestant spirit of Western man. The title also proves useful as an indicator of that invisible but persistent dimension in history — the interior personal critical assent to and dissent from the impingements of the non-self on the individual's life and thought.

The text of *Doctor Zhivago* is in three parts. The first concerns the period 1901 to the spring of 1918 and describes Yuri's youth, social milieu

and military medical service. The second part, 1918 to 1950, shows national and personal ferment, uncertainty, movement, and change as it affects Russia and Zhivago. Part three, illuminating the thought and feeling of Zhivago, is his legacy of poems. The scene is always and characteristically Russia, but it is both metropolitan and rural Russia: Moscow shares the stage with villages, steppes, and battlefields.

The story is simply summarized. At the age of 10, Yuri loses his mother, a little later his father. He grows up midst the stirrings of proletarian revolt (1905) and in intermittent contact with the youths whose paths many times later cross his and typify the various roles of Russian youth in the new order. Married, Yuri takes up medical practice, is conscripted during World War I, and continues to serve the Provisional Government (1917). He forms a liaison with Lara, who has sensual and spiritual appeals distinct from the domestic and social appeals of his wife. Compelled to serve as a medical officer with the Reds, Yuri escapes and rejoins Lara, eventually sends her out of reach of Red reprisal, himself lives in Moscow with a new companion, Marina. Out of joint with the times, his personal life, his reflections, his fragmentary publications, his artistic cravings and frustrations all seem to presage the fatal heart attack that ends his travail in 1930 at the age of (about) 40. The novel is carried beyond Yuri's death, to 1950, providing a kind of benevolent after-glow to dull the persistent moral questions and to sentimentalize the harsh realities of the revolutionary period.

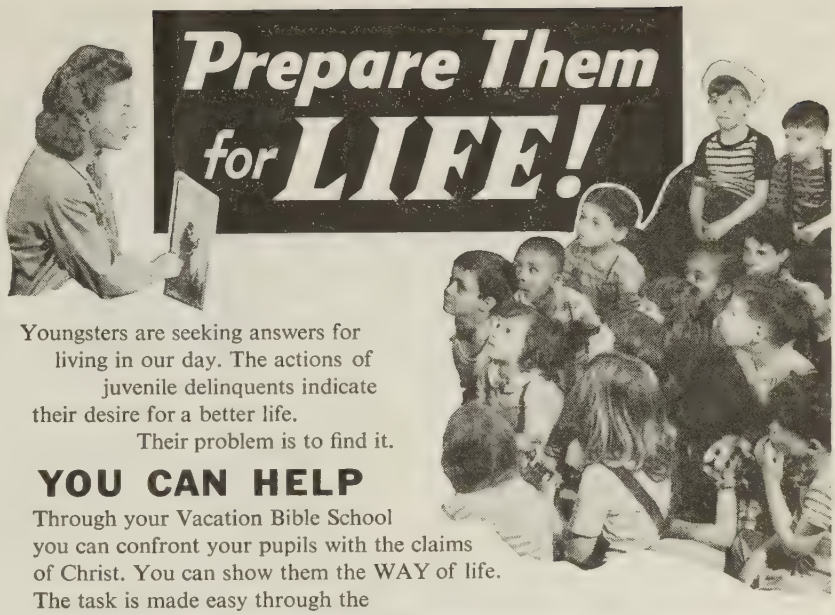
Being Is Becoming

It may be useful for those acquainted with Tolstoy to designate the panorama and variety of characters as like those in *War and Peace*. A kind of reverse comparison between the lovers and disintegration of personality in *Anna Karenina* and *Doctor Zhivago* might also be made. Pasternak gives us a vast country and a nation in turmoil. The physical movement over vast stretches is a kind of universal river in which at widely separate points islands — places or events — give brief respite to continuing change. Yuri's life, from the initial point in the novel, is caught up in the flux of his time. Three-fifths of the novel[1] are in fact devoted to the odyssey of Zhivago's physical and mental turmoil. Sometimes he moves alone, sometimes with his wife Tonya, his mistress Lara, an escapee Vasya. Always there is movement. Why?

(1.) Clearly, historical necessity demanded movement. "Mother Russia is on the move, she can't stand still. . ." (p. 136). International war and internal revolt cannot take place without considerable movement. Zhivago was able-bodied and a medical doctor, doubly conscriptable, inevitably an atom tossed about with the seething mass. The graphic and detailed description of mass and individual transportation in the novel will be doubly effective for anyone who has witnessed the vast land stretches, masses of population and paucity of transportation in the Orient as late as World War II. Having chosen his era, Pasternak was committed to the history of the time which moves hurriedly and relentlessly through this novel — and moves its people, body and soul, with it. "The Journey," Chapter 7 of Part One, is a notable epitome of this aspect of the novel.

(2.) Pasternak goes beyond historical necessity, however. Zhivago is destined for restlessness, for movement, for incessancy. Early cut off from the ties which hold one to a locality, to a way of life, to local absorptions, Yuri had to move — physically to Moscow and later to many other places. But mentally, spiritually, socially he was not of the world in which he found himself. Basic to the novel's fluidity is Zhivago's reflective, romantic dissatisfaction with both his external and interior worlds. Uprooted from the past, he surpasses history in refusing to take root in the present.

1. This review is based on the English translation. The Russian text was not available. In a sense, any translation of a work is a new creation. It may have the face and limbs of the prototype but lacks the breath and soul. While the translation can be used for general critical purposes, a finer critical appreciation may have to await a general adoption by the American people of the Russian language along with the French and German. It is time for that kind of spiritual expansion when scientific leadership in the Russian community complements the literary eminence of Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Chekhov and a host of lesser but still bright luminaries.



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He is always the man who will not be content. For him life is dynamic, ongoing, creative as well as procreative. To stop is to mutilate, to distort, to truncate. He is "careful to convey the living movement of his hand in his flowing writing . . . so that it should not lose expression . . ." (p. 391). He is overwhelmed by the movement around him: "The incessant, uninterrupted rustle and movement of the town . . . is a huge, immeasurable overture to life for each of us. . . . It is in these terms that I should like to write about the town" (p. 436).

His sympathies are not political or economic, not military or social. He thinks in terms of humanity, nature, and religion. His entire personality rejects force, class struggle, economic determinism, and materialism. It is this fundamental pulse beat that carries Zhivago into, through, and out of the society of his day. This interior movement of his thought, completely uncongenial to the social and political climate of his maturity, is a fatal disease. Rather, it is health within the body of disease. And within the movement of the city — on a local train[2] — he finds death, to his own and society's relief. Feeling faint, he tries to open a window, has a heart attack and dies. Those who do not need the window open, move on, always alive but always breathing death.

The natural movement of the historical situation serves to move the hero into historic events and through social milieus. Primarily, however, it moves him ideologically straight out of the novel itself. This seems to me a successful artistic achievement of harmony between structural design and dynamic function. Zhivago's passing from the scene is comparable to the release of energy *from* a furnace which retains the slag and ash.

Another feature of Pasternak's craftsmanship is the demonic element, again a characteristic of Russian myth, of Tolstoy, and of Dostoevsky. A number of half-legendary characters serve to maintain, stimulate, or humiliate Zhivago. Chief of these is Lara (see below in connection with the "burning candle").

Yevgrav, Yuri's half-brother, is such a demonic person. Depicted as a Kirghizian (Mongolian and Moslem as opposed to Yuri's Western and Christian outlook), he successfully bridges the passing and coming worlds, unobtrusively aids the intractable Yuri, appears at his death, and discovers Yuri's daughter by Lara. Zhivago early "knew for certain that this boy was the spirit of his death" (p. 188). Another demonic personality is Strelnikov, the new hard Antipov, Lara's husband, who at one time saves Zhivago from Red captivity but later becomes himself a victim of Red rule. Komarovsky could be brother to Dostoevsky's Svidrigailor in *Crime and Punishment*.[3] He is the sensualist to whom at one point Yuri relinquishes Lara for her safety from the new government.

These three seem to point up contrasts with Yuri: the political barbaric opportunist, the consistent revolutionary, the mercenary sensualist. But although Yuri lacks their vices and their doubtful virtue of complete adjustment to society, they also show the active characteristics and dynamism which were frustrated in Zhivago's life. Their magical properties offset, delineate, and critically illuminate Zhivago. They are the extroverts born to their times, Zhivago the introvert out of joint with his age; they capture events; Zhivago contemplates them.

Other demonic characters are Bacchus, the bear mauled coachman; the peasant-witch Kubarikha; the deaf Pogorovshikh; and the fanatic girl Sima. They are woven into the fabric of the story and reinforce the apocalyptic theme of the novel.

Pasternak uses effective imagery. Nature is in close harmony with history and society. Hardly a major change or event occurs without clear premonitions and accompaniments from nature. They do not always seem organic to the situation. Nevertheless his images convey Pasternak's philosophy as well as his craft. He places himself with the Romantics, making references to Pushkin, Goethe's nature philosophy, Schelling, and Hegel. References to Solovyov and Tiuchev further indicate Pasternak's ties to the metaphysical poetry and philosophy of the nineteenth century. The organismic view of all life and the intuition of demonic forces invading our small cosmos are consistently romantic elements in the novel. A few examples will illustrate.

The boy's terror of aloneness is translated into a conscious, malicious blizzard covering the mother's grave beyond access (p. 14). A school lesson about war is accompanied by a thunderstorm (p. 74). Approaching winter makes nature sinister: "in the world of men the air was heavy with something as inexorable as the coming death of nature" (p. 168). "He felt . . . as if God dwelt in the woods and Satan were lurking in the fields. . . . They loved . . . because . . . trees and clouds and sky and earth . . . willed it" (pp. 418, 447). Animate nature is not always philosophic. There are many fine passages expressing sensitivity to the beauty and variety of nature. Section 19 of Chapter 7 is such a gem. In the first chapter: "Flower smells, caught and dazed by the stagnant air, stood in still shafts over the beds transfixed by the heat" (p. 20). "Tinkling their glassy wings, dragon-flies, as transparent as the flames and the leaves, sailed slowly through the air" (p. 310). Pasternak is imaginatively poetic and technically authentic in his attention to the wide range of man's sensuous experiences in nature. His pen translates sensuous into psychological and spiritual reality.

Leitmotifs

Pasternak has also used leitmotifs to further his themes. The sign is one; the candle is another.

The sign is a large wooden one in Yuryatin and reads: "Moreau and Vetchikin. Seed Drills. Threshing Machines." Viewing of this sign precedes Zhivago's attack upon the assumption that Marxism is a science; he asserts: ". . . those who wield power are so anxious to establish the myth of their own infallibility that they turn their back on truth. . . . I don't like people who are indifferent to the truth" (p. 235). Later the same sign faces him as he looks from Lara's room; he tells her of Strelnikov, again criticizing the regime ". . . those who inspired the revolution aren't at home in anything except change and turmoil . . . ." And about Strelnikov: "The moment they don't need him they'll throw him out and trample on him quite mercilessly, as they have done with other military experts" (p. 268). The sign appears again as Zhivago is ab-

2. Anna Karenina died under a train; Tolstoy died at a railway station; Zhivago's father leaped to death from a train.

3. Pasternak is conscious heir to the Russian literary masters he loves. Anna Ivanovna's injury on the wardrobe in Chapter 3, resulting in her death, which is preceded by a philosophic-religious discussion, is very reminiscent of Tolstoy's "Death of Ivan Ilyich." Ivan, too, is hurt while furnishing his house; the injury leads to reflection on life, and reconciliation with the death which overtakes him.

ducted by the Reds for medical service: It "was lit by the rays of the setting sun" (p. 271). The day of private enterprise and an established way of life is done. Red force now arbitrarily disorders life.

By repeatedly associating the sign with similar thoughts in the viewer's mind, Pasternak makes it a silent but effective argument against the new economic theory and political power in Russia. He also makes it a witness to whatever human virtues existed in the private enterprise of the past.

The sign is an ideological symbol. The candle is an emotional one. It first appears when Lara in Antipov's room plans Komarovsky's murder. This was in 1911; the room was furnished with electricity; Lara did not need the candle. But she wished it: "she was fond of thinking in the dark by candlelight" (p. 79). This is a romantic touch, both nostalgic and demonic. The candle provides intimacy, secrecy, shadows: she is with her fiance; she plans vengeance; around her fecund person in the shadows of the future stand Antipov, who later loses her; Komarovsky, her seducer; Yuri, her lover. The candle melts some of the frost on the window; as Zhivago takes Tonya to the Sventitski's Christmas Party (where he will see Lara and Komarovsky) he notices this solitary candle in the electrified city, and the patch of glass it has melted clear. This starts a romantic, melancholy mood: he begins to compose a poem: " 'A candle burned. . . .' He hoped it would take shape of itself" (p. 81). By now the candle has involved in its light and shadows all the principals: Lara, Pasha, Yuri, Tonya and Komarovsky.

At Lara's marriage ceremony no matter how low she holds her candle, her husband's is lower. Lara is the demonic woman — she has the earth's energy, warmth, fertility. Later, in search of Pasha, Lara meets Yuri at the front; and when Yuri, living at Varykino with Lara, takes up his writing, he polishes the poem "Winter Night," which preserves the image and memory of the burning candle. The culmination of this motif is expressly presented (about 1930, 19 years later) as Lara mourns Yuri and reflects on her youth, when he "had not yet come into her life. . . . she could remember nothing except the candle burning on the window-sill and melting a round patch in the icy crust. . . . How could she know that Yuri had seen the candle . . . and that from the moment of his seeing its light . . . all that was preordained for him had seized control of his life?" (pp. 445-46).

The motif and the symbol are then carefully preserved and extended in the poem "Winter Night," part of Zhivago's literary legacy. Here the refrain "the candle burned" accrues to itself a range of meanings: (1) the light, both physical and as a symbol of life and hope; (2) human love: Lara and Pasha; (3) passion: Komarovsky; (4) guilt: Lara and Yuri; (5) warmth in a cold world: persistence of humanity in the desolation of natural winter and national chaos.

Doctor Zhivago has its warm and humorous qualities. It presents a full range of all levels of Russian society, treats of historic and mythical, religious, and philosophic subjects. Unfortunately only a brief indication of some of this cultural wealth can be given here. The author uses folklore. The twelfth chapter, "Iced Rowan Berries," is typical of Pasternak's technique of introducing something casually at one level of meaning in one milieu — in this instance a folk-song from the lips of a peasant-woman — moving on to other matters, and again somehow naturally picking up the "rowan berries" in a physical setting which aids Zhivago's escape, and finally driving home the combination of truth and poetry by identification of the rowan tree (the giver of fruit and the means of escape) with Lara, to whom he flees. This device is in some instances poetic, pleasant and effective; in others a bit artful.

Internal Evidence

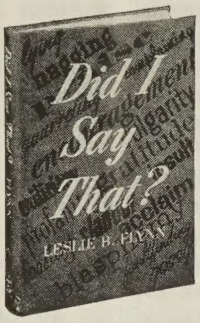
Pasternak (like Pushkin in *Onegin*) makes frequent allusions to history, literature, and philosophy. These are valuable in imparting an impetus to the author's point of view and providing an objective basis for interpretation.

The historic references are to Stenka Razin (1667), Hetman Mazeppa (1709), Pugachev (1774), and Gapon (1805), each of them a rebel who with rallying mobs became a formidable menace to despotic Russian rule. Historic depth is thus given contemporary developments, although with no sanctioning of revolutionary methods. Indeed, the slogan "Turn your bayonets on your masters" is identified as "That's the whole story. There's Marxism for you" (p. 170). Again: "Revolutionaries who take the law into their own hands are horrifying, not as criminals, but as machines that have got out of control . . ." (p. 268). Zhivago's judgment of the revolution and the class struggle is clear and frank: "Revolutions are made by fanatical men of action with one-track minds, men who are narrow-minded to the point of genius. They overturn the old order in a few hours . . . but for decades thereafter, for centuries, the spirit of narrowness which led to the upheaval is worshiped as holy" (p. 406). Divorcing himself from hatred of the bourgeois, the private citizen, he states with Pushkin: "An independent citizen is what I am" and continues to praise Pushkin and Chekov for devoting themselves to "the current, individual tasks . . . treating both their lives and their work as private, individual matters. . . . And these individual things have since become of concern to all, their work has ripened of itself. . . ." "People must be drawn to good by goodness" (pp. 259, 237).

The philosophic references are to Goethe, Schelling, Hegel, Herzen, Croce, and Solovyov.[4] The German philoso-

4. Vladimir Solovyov was a nineteenth-century philosopher and poet who attempted a synthesis of Christian theology and German philosophical idealism.

Ever ask yourself—



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phers from Kant on were avidly studied, adopted and in turn discarded by the Russians from the early nineteenth century, first under Belinsky's leadership and later under Solovyov's. Pasternak was trained in literature and philosophy, for a time in Germany. Hence his choice of the metaphysical (in literature: Romantic) nineteenth-century German philosophers is significant, as well as his mention of the later Benedetto Croce and the Western-educated Herzen. For Zhivago, and no doubt for Pasternak, the idealistic school of thought transcends the materialistic and deterministic schools of Feuerbach and Marx. For Zhivago the significant world is that of the spirit, imagination, nature and human personality as organic and dynamic creations.

Art is the creation of life in the face of death, the creation of beauty to outlast decay. (Again: Zhivago — the life-death agony.) "It was true of that work of art which is called the Revelation of St. John, and of all those works which have been completing it throughout the ages" (p. 89). In that sense it is the handmaid of history, which laboriously produces new higher levels of civilization to supersede the old. After Egypt, Greece, and Israel, says Sima, the demonic prophetess, "the last in time, not so far replaced by anything else and still being achieved by all that is inspired in our time, is Christianity" (p. 369). And Christianity, a cultural-religious rather than theological concept, enters history and makes all life beautiful and worthy: "He came, light-footed and clothed in light, with his marked humanity, his deliberate Galilean provincialism, and from that moment there . . . was only man — man the carpenter, the ploughman, the shepherd . . . man . . . who is sung in lullabies and portrayed in picture galleries . . ." (p. 49).

Pasternak's literary references in this novel are of two sorts: personal-romantic and historic-apocalyptic. Striking characteristics of Zhivago's personal history are comparable to some of those in works alluded to in the novel: *Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Rouge et Noir, Tale of Two Cities, Faust,* Kleist's stories. These works contain reservoirs of plot and situation, thought and action creatively adaptable to other times and places. Pasternak is generous in his embrace of man's universal literary heritage. He is creative in its use. As *Doctor Zhivago* is the story of a man as well as a time, it would indeed be strange if the fundamental problems of any man and time would not here also appear. This is true as well of the native references to Pushkin's *Onegin,* Chekov, Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and *Possessed,* Tolstoy, Gogol, Ostrovsky's *Thunderstorm,* Tiuchev, Nekrasov, and Gorki. In his diary, Zhivago writes: "Every man is born a Faust with a longing to embrace and experience and express everything in the world" (p. 258). All of these references are compatible with a view of man as an individual soul set in history and nature in dynamic relationship with a moral order and the physical universe.

The Apocalyptic

No Russian novel in the main stream of Russian literary tradition can escape being at once apocalyptic and Utopian. *Doctor Zhivago* is that also, not only by its own basic materials but also by its concrete allusions to Holy Writ, St. George and the Dragon, Faust, Robinson Crusoe, and Hamlet. The Tolstoyan social gospel and anti-institutionalism form a prominent apocalyptic and utopian thread throughout the novel. It is found early: "He craved an idea inspired yet concrete, that would . . . change the world for the better" (p. 17). Blazheiko "called the local council an Apostolic Seat and proclaimed a new millennial kingdom" (p. 125). "Such a thing happens only once in an eternity . . . it's real freedom . . . dropped out of the sky" (p. 136). "Russia is destined . . . the new order of things . . ." (p. 167). ". . . preaching the Second Coming and the end of the world" (p. 240). "The flag . . . is the purple kerchief of the death woman . . . [who] waves it enticing young men to . . . death, then she sends famine and plague" (p. 330). "The whole of the nineteenth century [revolutions, assassinations, Marxism] . . . was absorbed into Lenin, to be expressed . . . by him and to fall upon the old world as retribution for its deeds. And beside him arose . . . the immeasurably vast figure of Russia, bursting into flames like a light of redemption for all the sorrows and misfortunes of mankind" (p. 413).

Those who read will be able to correlate such statements with the Gospels and the Revelation of John, as well as with Tolstoy's primitivism and non-resistence philosophy, with nineteenth-century Pan-Slavism and with Dostoevsky's passionate concern for personal and social redemption.

The other apocalyptic and utopian references also strengthen the underlying romantic theme of yearning and striving for a better world. St. George (George is "Yuri" in Russian), traditional symbol of Christian heroism opposed to the dragon of evil, is not only given intensive mention in the text (p. 395) but is represented in "Zhivago's Poems" as a horseman engaged in a death struggle which ends with the hero lying in death (or in a swoon) (p. 508). But the unmistakable impression is given that Goodness can never be forever subdued by Evil. Robinson Crusoe presents an ideal: "What happiness . . . to create your own world, like Robinson Crusoe, in imitation of the Creator of the universe . . ." (p. 252). Of Hamlet, too, Pasternak makes an indecisive tormented character loath to assume his tragic Shakespearian role, but loather still to commit himself to contemporary violence and duplicity: "It was the disease of the age: that in his heart everyone was utterly different from his words and the outward appearance he assumed. Not one had a clear conscience . . ." (p. 409). In "Hamlet" Zhivago combines Biblical and Shakespearian references to produce his contemporary Tortured Man (p. 467).

All of these allusions are predicated on an opposition between events and ideals, a cleavage between political developments and utopian idealism. There is an emphasis on Christian social ideals quite incompatible with atheistic materialism and Communist rejection of Christianity. "One must be true to immortality . . . another word for life . . . — true to Christ!" (p. 18). Above all, one finds a hot championing of personality. In the first chapter the theme appears and is expressed frequently thereafter: "It is always a sign of mediocrity in people when they herd together, whether their group loyalty is to Solovyov or to Kant or Marx. The truth is only sought by individuals . . ." (p. 18).

The transition of the human race to a new world is paralleled in miniscule by Zhivago's concept of personal immortality and resurrection. Self-consciousness as the criterion of personality is always relative to objective relationships; therefore immortality is achieved

when one lives on in others, in memories, in thoughts. A familiar enough interpretation of the theological doctrine of resurrection, this has special interest because the two chief protagonists, Yuri and Lara, see the cycle of their parents' life repeated in them and projected beyond them in their progeny. Her mother's paramour, Komarovsky, becomes Lara's seducer. Yuri's father left behind two mistresses, one in Paris with her children. Yuri himself after the war is separated from Tonya and his children, who live in Paris, while he lives with Lara and Marina. Yuri has re-duplicated his father's uxorius pattern. Moreover, Yuri's immortality in his progeny is reinforced after his death by the discovery many years later that the waif Tanya is the natural child of Lara and Yuri. Tanya's existence suggests symbolic fulfillment of Yuri's ideal — the identification of fecund Russia with reflective Western Europe.

Thus Zhivago, projected into the world, is projected beyond the grave in his mistresses and children, in his publications, friends, half-brother, and all the memories and conversations that will continue his personality in space and time. Just such a projection of his spirit and ideals consciously seizes his friends Dudorov and Gordon about 1950, when with Zhivago's writings at hand, they feel freedom, peace, and happiness permeating "this holy city" and the whole land. One does feel, of course, that this is rather a pious hope than a factual state.

Summary

Doctor Zhivago like most Russian works cannot quickly be exhausted. Literary devices and religious, philosophical, and esthetic ideas in the novel offer productive avenues for pleasure and reflection to the perceptive reader. But at this point and for this presentation, perhaps the chief meanings of the novel should be drawn together.

(1) *Content.* As Russia has lost control of her destiny by violence, so Zhivago has lost direction of his own destiny by his Hamlet-like reflective incapacity to act. Like Hamlet, he must leave his untimely stage. He is another Superfluous Man in Russian literary history, following Onegin, Oblomov, and others who were torn between fulfillment and frustration. The country's and the man's history are fluid, turbulent, uncertain. Russia is adrift from Christian and Slavic culture; Zhivago is adrift from the new Russia. Moral personal guilt overshadows Zhivago's moral transcendence of his age; historic national guilt overshadows Russia's Slavic and Tolstoyan cultural ideals. The times have thwarted the man; he is Zhivago, Living in Agony.

(2) *Author.* The novel is a remarkable testament to the spirit of man, which, deprived for decades of nurture, encouragement and freedom, nevertheless preserves its own integrity through its liberal heritage of philosophy and literature, religion and history. That Pasternak, a Soviet protegé, should have labored to produce this particular novel with its humane themes centering about naive Christianity, German idealism, and Russian utopianism is an amazing and heartening phenomenon. Pasternak is frank and reflective about government, society, religion, and personality in a way that would do credit to a free Western writer. His genuine love of "Mother Russia" is strikingly demonstrated by the honesty and courage of this book.

(3) Pasternak has here achieved a novel which once more significantly interprets the land, the people, and the forces of Russia to our generation. It also again reveals man to himself and probes the basic questions of human life and destiny with which all universal literature is concerned, and these questions are at least as pertinent today for Western Man as for Soviet Man. Therefore *Doctor Zhivago* deserves to take its place in the grand series of literary works given the world by Russia.

Fault may be found with details, characters, images, discourses, fragmentary and fortuitous elements. In the selection, discard, and recombination of reality, Pasternak sometimes strains credibility and art. Yet in common with Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, he produces magical effects of people and circumstances, migrations and locations, which manage to convey the vastness and intimacy, variety and unity of life. With such books, formal criteria of craftsmanship inevitably defer to the stream of communication, to the substance and significance of the theme. It is a kind of romantic irony that Pasternak can reflect in his novel on the magic coincidences encountered: "All these people [i.e., the main characters in the novel] there, together, in this one place" (p. 113). The author's own amazed recognition of the fatefulness of it breathes credibility into an otherwise sceptical reading. *Doctor Zhivago* does not attain Flaubertian impeccability, but again the wisdom, the vision, and the commitment of the author communicate themselves; when not by means of the art, then by the very artlessness, or occasionally in spite of the artfulness.

Doctor Zhivago is the keen eye Pasternak gives the reader by which not only to see but to perceive the impact on religious and philosophic man of the most radical development of modern history, a development predicated on inhuman theories of materialism, determinism, and class struggle. For both the man and the nation cataclysmic internal disintegration threatens to surpass in magnitude cataclysmic external events.

The doctor dies. The patient survives. Another ominous paradox! Mother Russia remains in the grip of the dragon. Years and centuries may pass, but there must arise another St. George to strike down the evil. Russia must heed the diagnosis before a moral autopsy vindicates the one, among the many, who clearly recorded both the symptoms and the ailment.

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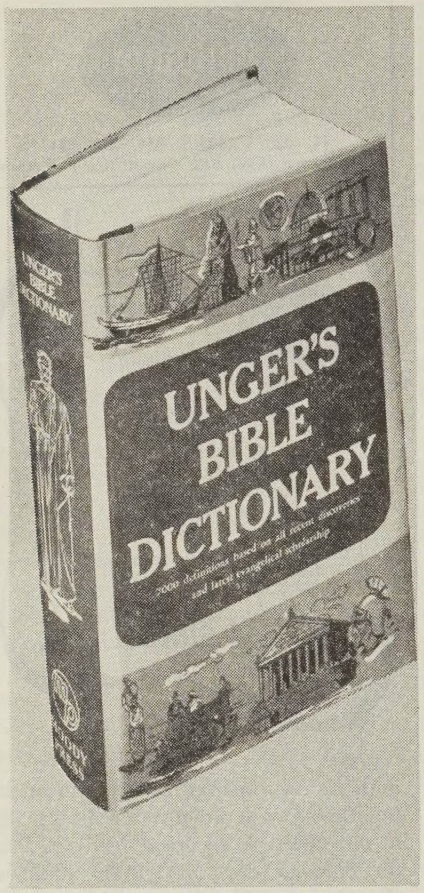

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